

Sharp local estimates for the Szegő-Weinberger profile in Riemannian manifolds

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Abstract

We study the local Szegő-Weinberger profile in a geodesic ball $B_g(y_0, r_0)$ centered at a point y_0 in a Riemannian manifold (\mathcal{M}, g) . This profile is obtained by maximizing the first nontrivial Neumann eigenvalue μ_2 of the Laplace-Beltrami Operator Δ_g on \mathcal{M} among subdomains of $B_g(y_0, r_0)$ with fixed volume. We derive sharp asymptotic bounds of this profile in terms of the scalar curvature of \mathcal{M} at y_0 . As a corollary, we deduce a local comparison principle depending only on the scalar curvature. Our study is related to previous results on the profile corresponding to the minimization of the first Dirichlet eigenvalue of Δ_g , but additional difficulties arise due to the fact that μ_2 is degenerate in the unit ball in \mathbb{R}^N and geodesic balls do not yield the optimal lower bound in the asymptotics we obtain.

1 Introduction

Let (\mathcal{M}, g) be a Riemannian manifold of dimension N , $N \geq 2$. For a bounded regular domain $\Omega \subset \mathcal{M}$ we consider the Neumann eigenvalue problem

$$\Delta_g f + \mu f = 0 \quad \text{in } \Omega, \quad \langle \nabla f, \eta \rangle_g = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial\Omega, \quad (1)$$

where $\Delta_g f = \operatorname{div}_g(\nabla f)$ is the Laplace-Beltrami operator on \mathcal{M} and η is the outer unit normal to $\partial\Omega$. The set of eigenvalues, counted with multiplicities, in the above eigenvalue problem is given as an increasing sequence

$$0 = \mu_1(\Omega, g) < \mu_2(\Omega, g) \leq \dots + \infty.$$

By results of Szegő [13] and Weinberger [14], balls maximize μ_2 among domains having fixed volume in $\mathcal{M} = \mathbb{R}^N$. More precisely, in [13] this was proved for the planar case $N = 2$, whereas in [14] the case $N \geq 3$ was considered. As remarked in [4] and [2], this result extends to the case of the N -dimensional hyperbolic space. Moreover, the same conclusion holds for domains contained in a hemisphere [2] and – under further restrictions on the domain – also in rank-1 symmetric spaces [1].

The aim of the present paper is to study the geometric variational problem of maximizing $\mu_2(\Omega, g)$ among domains with fixed volume *locally* in a general complete Riemannian manifold (\mathcal{M}, g) . In order to state our results, we need to introduce some notations. For a subset $\Omega \subset \mathcal{M}$, we let $|\Omega|_g$ denote the volume of Ω with respect to the metric g . For $0 < v < |\mathcal{M}|_g$, we define the *Szegő-Weinberger profile* of \mathcal{M} as

$$SW_{\mathcal{M}}(v, g) := \sup_{\Omega \subset \mathcal{M}, |\Omega|_g = v} \mu_2(\Omega, g).$$

Here and in the following, we assume without further mention that only regular bounded domains $\Omega \subset \mathcal{M}$ are considered. By Weinberger's result in [14], we then have

$$SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v) = \left(\frac{|B|}{v} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \mu_2(B).$$

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where B denotes the unit ball in \mathbb{R}^N . The eigenvalue $\mu_2(B)$ has multiplicity N with corresponding eigenfunctions $x \mapsto \varphi(|x|) \frac{x_i}{|x|}$, $i = 1, \dots, N$, where φ can be expressed in terms of a rescaled Bessel function of the first kind and satisfies $\varphi(0) = \varphi'(1) = 0$. For matters of convenience, we normalize φ such that

$$\int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N-1} dt = \frac{1}{|B|}, \quad (2)$$

see Section 2 below. We are interested in the local effect of curvature terms on the Szegő-Weinberger profile. For this we study the profile in a small geodesic ball $B_g(y_0, r)$ of \mathcal{M} centered at a point $y_0 \in \mathcal{M}$ with radius r . In our main result, we obtain the following optimal two-sided local bound.

Theorem 1.1 *Let \mathcal{M} be a complete N -dimensional Riemannian manifold, and let S denote the scalar curvature function on \mathcal{M} . Moreover, let $y_0 \in \mathcal{M}$, and let*

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma_N &= \frac{2\mu_2(B) + (N+2)(N-2) - (N+2)|B|\varphi^2(1)}{6N(N+2)\mu_2(B)} \\ &= \frac{2\mu_2(B) + (N+2)(N-2)}{6N(N+2)\mu_2(B)} - \frac{1}{3N(\mu_2(B) - N + 1)}. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Then we have:

(i) As $v \rightarrow 0$,

$$\frac{SW_{\mathcal{M}}(v)}{SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v)} \geq 1 - \gamma_N S(y_0) \left(\frac{v}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + o(v^{\frac{2}{N}}). \quad (4)$$

(ii) For every $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists $r_\varepsilon > 0$ such that

$$1 - (\gamma_N S(y_0) + \varepsilon) \left(\frac{v}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \leq \frac{SW_{B_g(y_0, r_\varepsilon)}(v)}{SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v)} \leq 1 - (\gamma_N S(y_0) - \varepsilon) \left(\frac{v}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \quad (5)$$

for $v \in (0, |B_g(y_0, r_\varepsilon)|_g)$.

We note that the coefficient γ_N is uniquely determined by the two-sided estimate (5) and therefore sharp. The equality (3) is derived from an integral identity for Bessel functions which gives $|B|\varphi^2(1) = \frac{2\mu_2(B)}{\mu_2(B) - N + 1}$, see Lemma 2.1 below. As a consequence of Theorem 1.1, we readily deduce the following local isochoric comparison principle related to the Szegő-Weinberger profile.

Corollary 1.2 *Let (\mathcal{M}_1, g_1) , (\mathcal{M}_2, g_2) be two N -dimensional complete Riemannian manifolds, $N \geq 2$ with scalar curvature functions S_1, S_2 respectively. Let $y_1 \in \mathcal{M}_1$ and $y_2 \in \mathcal{M}_2$ such that $S_1(y_1) < S_2(y_2)$.*

(i) If $\gamma_N < 0$, then there exists $r > 0$ such that

$$SW_{B_{g_1}(y_1, r)}(v) < SW_{B_{g_2}(y_2, r)}(v) \quad (6)$$

for any $v \in (0, \min\{|B_{g_1}(y_1, r)|_{g_1}, |B_{g_2}(y_2, r)|_{g_2}\})$.

(ii) If $\gamma_N > 0$, then there exists $r > 0$ such that

$$SW_{B_{g_1}(y_1, r)}(v) > SW_{B_{g_2}(y_2, r)}(v) \quad (7)$$

for any $v \in (0, \min\{|B_{g_1}(y_1, r)|_{g_1}, |B_{g_2}(y_2, r)|_{g_2}\})$.

We emphasise that in the special case where (\mathcal{M}_2, g_2) is a space form of constant curvature, the right hand sides in (6) and (7) may be replaced with $\mu_2(E, g_2)$, where E is any geodesic ball of volume v in \mathcal{M}_2 . This follows from the local expansion of μ_2 in small geodesic balls in these manifolds, see Remark 3.3(ii) below.

As is evident from Corollary 1.2, it is important to know the sign of γ_N . By (3), γ_N is negative (resp. positive) iff

$$\mu_2(B) < \kappa_N := -\frac{N^2 - 4N - 6}{4} + \sqrt{\left(\frac{N^2 - 4N - 6}{4}\right)^2 + \frac{(N-1)(N^2 - 4)}{2}} \quad (8)$$

(resp. “ $>$ ”), and this can be tested numerically for every given $N \in \mathbb{N}$. In particular, as detailed in Remark 2.2 below, we have $\mu_2(B) < \kappa_N$ and hence $\gamma_N < 0$ for $N \leq 10$. In fact, exemplary computations suggest that this is the case for all $N \in \mathbb{N}$, whereas the difference tends to zero as $N \rightarrow \infty$.

Corollary 1.2 should be seen in comparison with the results in [5, 6, 8] concerning the isoperimetric profile $I_{\mathcal{M}}$ and the Faber-Krahn profile $FK_{\mathcal{M}}$ of \mathcal{M} . More precisely, set

$$I_{\mathcal{M}}(v, g) := \inf_{\Omega \subset \mathcal{M}, |\Omega|_g = v} |\partial\Omega|_g$$

and

$$FK_{\mathcal{M}}(v, g) := \inf_{\Omega \subset \mathcal{M}, |\Omega|_g = v} \lambda_1(\Omega, g),$$

with $\lambda_1(\Omega, g)$ being the first Dirichlet eigenvalue of $-\Delta_g$ in Ω . Let $y \in \mathcal{M}$ and $k \in \mathbb{R}$ be such that $S(y) < (N-1)Nk$, where $S(y)$ denotes the scalar curvature of \mathcal{M} at y . Furthermore, let (\mathbb{M}^N, g_k) denote the space form of constant sectional curvature k . Then there exists $r_y > 0$ such that for any $v \in (0, |B_g(y, r_y)|_g)$ and any geodesic ball E of volume v in (\mathbb{M}^N, g_k) , we have

$$I_{B_g(y, r_y)}(v, g) > |\partial E|_{g_k}, \quad (9)$$

$$FK_{B_g(y, r_y)}(v, g) > \lambda_1(E, g_k). \quad (10)$$

Inequality (9) was established by Druet [6], and (10) was derived independently by Druet [5] and the first author [8]. The first step in the proof of (10) is the following expansion of $\lambda_1(B_g(y, r), g)$ when $r \rightarrow 0$:

$$\lambda_1(B_g(y, r), g) = \frac{\lambda_1(B)}{r^2} - \frac{S(y_0)}{6} + O(r) \quad (11)$$

This expansion had already been obtained by Chavel in [4, Chapter 8]. In the proof of Theorem 1.1, we need to derive a corresponding expansion for $\mu_2(B_g(y, r), g)$. This is more difficult since $\mu_2(B)$ is degenerate with multiplicity N and the corresponding eigenfunctions are nonradial. As a consequence, an anisotropic curvature term appears in the corresponding expansion. More precisely, we have

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) = \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + \alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ R_{min}(y_0) + o(1) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0 \quad (12)$$

with suitable constants α_N^\pm and $R_{min}(y_0) = \inf\{Ric_{y_0}(A, A) : A \in T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}, |A| = 1\}$, see Proposition 3.1 below. In order to obtain an expansion depending only on the scalar curvature, we need to consider suitable geodesic ellipsoids with small eccentricity. This is a crucial step in the proof of Theorem 1.1, since – in contrast to the Faber-Krahn profile – geodesic balls do not give rise to optimal two-sided bounds. As a further tool, we need a quantitative version of the Szegő-Weinberger inequality, which has been obtained very recently in the euclidean case by Brasco and Pratelli [3]. In the proof of Theorem 1.1 we combine these tools with variants of ideas in [8] and [1, 2, 14] to control error terms and to construct suitable test functions for the variational characterization of μ_2 , see Section 5 below.

We like to mention that [8] also contains a statement about the local expansion of a profile related to *minimizing* μ_2 among domains of fixed volume relative to an open set, see [8, Theorem 1.3]. However, the proof of this statement is not correct since it relies on a comparison with a relative isoperimetric profile which does not correspond to the Neumann boundary conditions in (1) but rather to mixed boundary conditions.

Theorem 1.1 gives a first hint that critical domains for μ_2 which are nearly balls, if they exist, might be located near critical points of the scalar curvature of \mathcal{M} (at least in the twodimensional

case). Here, roughly speaking, by a critical domain we mean a domain where μ_2 is critical with respect to volume preserving perturbations. Pacard and Sicbaldi [12] showed that close to non-degenerate critical points of the scalar curvature there exist small critical domains for the first Dirichlet eigenvalue of Δ_g . The corresponding problem for the Neumann eigenvalue μ_2 seems much more difficult. We note that Zanger [15] derived a Hadamard type formula (in the spirit of [9, p. 522]) for a Neumann eigenvalue which depends smoothly on domain variations. However, due to possible degeneracy, μ_2 might not depend smoothly on domain variations, and therefore it is not clear how critical domains should be defined. On the other hand, in [7] a notion of critical domains for higher Dirichlet eigenvalues, which may also be degenerate, is derived via analytic perturbation theory. It therefore seems natural – but far from obvious – to develop and analyze a similar notion for μ_2 . This is part of current work.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we collect some properties of the function φ appearing in the definition of the eigenfunctions corresponding to $\mu_2(B)$, and we also recall some basic notations from Riemannian geometry. In Section 3 we provide an expansion of $\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r))$ as $r \rightarrow 0$. In Section 4 we calculate a corresponding expansion for suitably chosen geodesic ellipsoids with small eccentricity. As shown by Corollary 4.2, these ellipsoids are suitable test domains to derive Part (i) of Theorem 1.1, and from this the lower bound in Part (ii) follows. Section 5 is devoted to collect all tools needed for the proof of the upper bound in Theorem 1.1(ii). In particular, we use the above-mentioned stability estimate of Brasco and Pratelli [3] in this section, see Lemma 5.2. Arguing by contradiction, we then complete the proof of Theorem 1.1 in Section 6.

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2 Preliminaries and Notations

We denote by B the unit ball in \mathbb{R}^N . Moreover, for a smooth bounded domain Ω of a complete Riemannian manifold (\mathcal{M}, g) , we write $\mu_2 = \mu_2(\Omega, g)$ for the first nontrivial eigenvalue of (1). If $\mathcal{M} = \mathbb{R}^N$ and g is the euclidean metric, we simply write $\mu_2(\Omega)$ in place of $\mu_2(\Omega, g)$. As noted already, $\mu_2(B)$ is of multiplicity N with corresponding eigenfunctions given by $\varphi(|x|)\frac{x_i}{|x|}$, $i = 1, \dots, N$ with

$$\varphi'' + \frac{N-1}{t}\varphi' + \left(\mu_2(B) - \frac{N-1}{t^2}\right)\varphi = 0, \quad t \in (0, 1), \quad \varphi(0) = \varphi'(1) = 0. \quad (13)$$

Throughout this paper, we assume the normalization (2), which equivalently yields

$$\int_B \varphi^2(|x|) dx = N \quad \text{and} \quad \int_B \varphi^2(|x|) \left(\frac{x^i}{|x|}\right)^2 dx = 1 \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, N. \quad (14)$$

The function φ and the eigenvalue $\mu_2(B)$ are obtained via $J_{N/2}$, the the Bessel function of the first kind of order $N/2$. Indeed, $\sqrt{\mu_2(B)}$ is the first positive zero of the derivative of $t \mapsto t^{(2-N)/2}J_{N/2}(t)$, and φ is a scalar multiple of the function

$$t \mapsto g(t) = t^{(2-N)/2}J_{N/2}(\sqrt{\mu_2(B)}t). \quad (15)$$

More precisely, by (2) we have

$$\varphi(t) = \frac{g(t)}{\sqrt{|B| \int_0^1 g^2 t^{N-1} dt}}. \quad (16)$$

The equality in the definition of γ_N in (3) is an immediate consequence of the following lemma.

Lemma 2.1 *We have*

$$\mu_2(B) > N - 1 \quad \text{and} \quad |B|\varphi^2(1) = \frac{2\mu_2(B)}{\mu_2(B) - N + 1} \quad \text{for all dimensions } N \geq 1.$$

PROOF. Set $\mu_2 := \mu_2(B)$. Since $\sqrt{\mu_2(B)}$ is the first zero of the derivative of the function $t \mapsto t^{(2-N)/2} J_{N/2}(t)$, we infer that

$$(J'_{N/2})^2(\sqrt{\mu_2}) = \frac{(N-2)^2}{4} \frac{1}{\mu_2} J_{N/2}^2(\sqrt{\mu_2}). \quad (17)$$

Moreover, for the function g defined in (15) we have by [10, p.129, formula (5.14.5)]

$$\int_0^1 t^{N-1} g^2 dt = \int_0^1 t J_{N/2}^2(\sqrt{\mu_2} t) dt = \frac{1}{2} \left[(J'_{N/2})^2(\sqrt{\mu_2}) + \left(1 - \frac{N^2}{4\mu_2}\right) J_{N/2}^2(\sqrt{\mu_2}) \right]. \quad (18)$$

Inserting (17) in (18) yields

$$\int_0^1 t^{N-1} g^2 dt = \frac{\mu_2 - N + 1}{2\mu_2} J_{N/2}^2(\sqrt{\mu_2}), \quad (19)$$

and this implies $\mu_2 > N - 1$. Moreover, since $g(1) = J_{N/2}(\sqrt{\mu_2})$, we conclude by (16) that

$$|B|\varphi^2(1) = \frac{g^2(1)}{\int_0^1 t^{N-1} g^2 dt} = \frac{2\mu_2}{\mu_2 - N + 1},$$

as claimed. ■

Remark 2.2 As claimed in the introduction, one may use numerical methods to calculate $\sqrt{\mu_2(B)}$ as the first zero of the function $t \mapsto \frac{d}{dt}[t^{(2-N)/2} J_{N/2}(t)]$ (which can be expressed in terms of Bessel functions again by recurrence relations). In particular we obtain, with κ_N as defined in (8),

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(B) &< 3.40 < 5 = \kappa_2 && \text{for } N = 2; \\ \mu_2(B) &< 4.34 < \frac{9 + \sqrt{161}}{4} = \kappa_3 && \text{for } N = 3; \\ \mu_2(B) &< 5.30 < 6 = \kappa_4 && \text{for } N = 4; \\ \mu_2(B) &< 6.27 < \frac{1 + \sqrt{673}}{4} = \kappa_5 && \text{for } N = 5; \\ \mu_2(B) &< 7.24 < \frac{\sqrt{329} - 3}{2} = \kappa_6 && \text{for } N = 6; \\ \mu_2(B) &< 8.22 < 8.45 < \frac{3\sqrt{265} - 15}{4} = \kappa_7 && \text{for } N = 7; \\ \mu_2(B) &< 9.20 < 9.37 < \frac{\sqrt{1009} - 13}{2} = \kappa_8 && \text{for } N = 8; \\ \mu_2(B) &< 10.18 < 10.31 < \frac{\sqrt{6449} - 39}{4} = \kappa_9 && \text{for } N = 9; \\ \mu_2(B) &\approx 11.17 < 11.27 < \frac{3\sqrt{273} - 27}{2} = \kappa_{10} && \text{for } N = 10. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore $\gamma_N < 0$ for $N \leq 10$, as claimed in the introduction.

Let (\mathcal{M}, g) be a complete Riemannian manifold of dimension N . We fix $y_0 \in \mathcal{M}$ and consider an orthonormal basis E_1, \dots, E_N of $T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}$. In the sequel, it will be convenient to use the (somewhat sloppy) notation

$$X := x^i E_i \in T_{y_0}\mathcal{M} \quad \text{for } x \in \mathbb{R}^N.$$

Here and in the following, we sum over repeated upper and lower indices as usual. We consider the geodesic coordinate system

$$\mathbb{R}^N \ni x \mapsto \Psi(x) := \text{Exp}_{y_0}(X) \quad (20)$$

A geodesic ball in \mathcal{M} centered at y_0 with radius $r > 0$ is defined as $B_g(y_0, r) = \Psi(rB)$. The map Ψ induces coordinate vector fields $Y_i := \Psi_* \frac{\partial}{\partial x^i}$, which are pointwise given by

$$Y_i(x) = d\text{Exp}_{y_0}(X)E_i \in T_{\Psi(x)}\mathcal{M}, \quad i = 1, \dots, N.$$

As usual, we write the metric in local coordinates by setting

$$g_{ij}(x) = \langle Y_i(x), Y_j(x) \rangle_g \quad \text{for } x \in \mathbb{R}^N.$$

The proof of the following local expansions can be found in [11].

Lemma 2.3 *In the above notations, for any $i, j = 1, \dots, N$, we have*

$$g_{ij}(x) = \delta_{ij} + \frac{1}{3} \langle R_{y_0}(X, E_i)X, E_j \rangle_g + O(|x|^3) \quad \text{and} \quad dv_g(x) = \left(1 - \frac{1}{6} \text{Ric}_{y_0}(X, X) + O(|x|^3)\right) dx.$$

Here dx is the volume element of \mathbb{R}^N , dv_g is the volume element of \mathcal{M} ,

$$R_{y_0} : T_{y_0}\mathcal{M} \times T_{y_0}\mathcal{M} \times T_{y_0}\mathcal{M} \rightarrow T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}$$

is the Riemannian curvature tensor at y_0 and

$$\text{Ric}_{y_0} : T_{y_0}\mathcal{M} \times T_{y_0}\mathcal{M} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \quad \text{Ric}_{y_0}(X, Y) = - \sum_{i=1}^N \langle R_{y_0}(X, E_i)Y, E_i \rangle$$

is the Ricci tensor at y_0 . Moreover, the volume expansion of metric balls is given by

$$|B_g(y_0, r)|_g = r^N |B| \left(1 - \frac{1}{6(N+2)} r^2 S(y_0) + O(r^4)\right); \quad (21)$$

where S is the scalar curvature function on \mathcal{M} .

Here and in the following, once y_0 is fixed, we also write $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ in place of $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_g$ to denote the scalar product on $T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}$ induced by the metric g . It will turn out useful to put

$$R_{ijkl} := \langle R_{y_0}(E_i, E_j)E_k, E_l \rangle \quad \text{and} \quad R_{ij} := \text{Ric}_{y_0}(E_i, E_j) \quad \text{for } i, j = 1, \dots, N. \quad (22)$$

The scalar curvature of \mathcal{M} at y_0 is given by $S(y_0) = \sum_{i=1}^N R_{ii}$. We point out that the orthonormal basis E_i , $i = 1, \dots, N$ can be chosen such that

$$R_{ij} = 0 \quad \text{for } i \neq j, \quad (23)$$

and we will fix such a choice from now on. We finally note that the euclidean scalar product of $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^N$ will simply be denoted by $x \cdot y$.

3 Expansion of μ_2 for small geodesic balls

The main goal of this section is the derivation of the following expansion for μ_2 on small geodesic balls centered at y_0 .

Proposition 3.1 *For $r > 0$ we have*

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) = \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + \alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ R_{\min}(y_0) + o(1),$$

where

$$\alpha_N^- = \frac{1}{6} \left(\frac{|B|\varphi^2(1)}{N+2} - 1 \right), \quad \alpha_N^+ = \frac{1}{6} \left(\frac{|B|\varphi^2(1)}{N+2} + 1 \right), \quad R_{\min}(y_0) = \inf_{A \in T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}, |A|=1} \text{Ric}_{y_0}(A, A)$$

and $o(1) \rightarrow 0$ as $r \rightarrow 0$.

PROOF. Let $r > 0$ be smaller than the injectivity radius of \mathcal{M} at y_0 , so that $B_g(y_0, r)$ is a regular domain. Let $u_r \in C^3(\overline{B_g(y_0, r)})$ be an eigenfunction corresponding to the eigenvalue problem

$$\Delta_g u_r + \mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) u_r = 0 \quad \text{in } B_g(y_0, r), \quad \langle \nabla u_r, \eta_r \rangle_g = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial B_g(y_0, r),$$

where η_r denotes the outer unit normal on $\partial B_g(y_0, r)$. Replacing u_r by a scalar multiple if necessary, we may assume that u_r is a minimizer of the minimization problem

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) = \inf \left\{ \int_{B_g(y_0, r)} |\nabla f|_g^2 dv_g : f \in H^1(B_g(y_0, r)), \int_{B_g(y_0, r)} f^2 dv_g = 1, \int_{B_g(y_0, r)} f dv_g = 0 \right\}.$$

Via the exponential map, we pull back the problem to the unit ball $B \subset \mathbb{R}^N$. For this we consider the pull back metric of g under the map $B \rightarrow \mathcal{M}$, $x \mapsto \Psi(rx)$, rescaled with the factor $\frac{1}{r^2}$. Denoting this metric on B by g_r , we then have, in euclidean coordinates,

$$[g_r]_{ij}(x) = \left\langle \frac{\partial}{\partial x^i}, \frac{\partial}{\partial x^j} \right\rangle_{g_r} \Big|_x = \langle Y_i(\Psi(rx)), Y_j(\Psi(rx)) \rangle_g = g_{ij}(rx),$$

so that

$$[g_r]_{ij}(x) = \delta_{ij} + \frac{r^2}{3} \langle R_{y_0}(X, E_i) X, E_j \rangle + O(r^3) \quad (24)$$

and

$$g_r^{ij}(x) = \delta^{ij} - \frac{r^2}{3} \langle R_{y_0}(X, E_i) X, E_j \rangle + O(r^3) \quad (25)$$

uniformly for $x \in \overline{B}$ as a consequence of Lemma 2.3. Here, as usual, $(g_r^{ij})_{ij}$ denotes the inverse of the matrix $([g_r]_{ij})_{ij}$. Setting $|g_r| = \det([g_r]_{ij})_{ij}$, we also have $\sqrt{|g_r|}(x) = 1 - \frac{r^2}{6} Ric_{y_0}(X, X) + O(r^3)$ for $x \in \overline{B}$ by Lemma 2.3. Since this expansion is valid in the sense of C^1 -functions on \overline{B} , we have

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x^i} \sqrt{|g_r|} = -\frac{r^2}{3} Ric_{y_0}(X, E_i) + O(r^3) \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, N. \quad (26)$$

We now consider the rescaled eigenfunction

$$\Phi_r : \overline{B} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \quad \Phi_r(x) = r^{\frac{N}{2}} u_r(\Psi(rx))$$

which satisfies

$$\Delta_{g_r} \Phi_r + \mu_2(B, g_r) \Phi_r = 0 \quad \text{in } B, \quad \langle \nabla \Phi_r, \eta \rangle_{g_r} = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial B,$$

with

$$\Delta_{g_r} \Phi_r = \frac{1}{\sqrt{|g_r|}} \frac{\partial}{\partial x^i} \left(\sqrt{|g_r|} g_r^{ij} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^j} \right) \quad \text{and} \quad \mu_2(B, g_r) = r^2 \mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g).$$

Moreover, $\int_B \Phi_r^2 dv_{g_r} = 1$ and $\int_B \Phi_r dv_{g_r} = 0$ with $dv_{g_r} = \sqrt{|g_r|} dx$. Since g_r converges to the Euclidean metric in \overline{B} , it is easy to see from the variational characterization of μ_2 that $\mu_2(B, g_r) \rightarrow \mu_2(B)$. Moreover, by using standard elliptic regularity theory and compact Sobolev embeddings, one may show that, along a sequence $r_k \rightarrow 0$, we have $\Phi_{r_k} \rightarrow \Phi$ in $H^1(B)$ for some function $\Phi \in C_{loc}^2(B) \cap C^1(\overline{B})$ satisfying

$$\Delta \Phi + \mu_2(B) \Phi = 0 \quad \text{in } B, \quad \langle \nabla \Phi, \eta \rangle = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial B, \quad \int_B \Phi^2 dx = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad \int_B \Phi dx = 0.$$

Hence there exists $a = (a_1, \dots, a_N) = (a^1, \dots, a^N) \in \mathbb{R}^N$ with $|a| = 1$ and such that

$$\Phi(x) = \varphi(|x|) \frac{a \cdot x}{|x|} \quad \text{for } x \in \overline{B}.$$

For matters of convenience, we will continue to write r instead of r_k in the following. By integration by parts, using $\langle \nabla \Phi_r, \eta \rangle_{g_r} = 0$ and $dv_{g_r} = \sqrt{|g_r|} dx$, we have

$$\mu_2(B, g_r) \int_B \Phi \Phi_r dv_{g_r} = - \int_B \Phi \Delta_{g_r} \Phi_r dv_{g_r} = \int_B \sqrt{|g_r|} g_r^{ij} \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^j} dx.$$

In the following, it will be convenient to use the notation

$$\tilde{\nabla} h = \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{\partial h}{\partial x^i} E_i : \bar{B} \rightarrow T_{y_0} \mathcal{M} \quad \text{for a } C^1\text{-function } h \text{ defined on } \bar{B}.$$

With this notation we find, using (25) and (26) and integrating by parts again,

$$\begin{aligned} \int_B \sqrt{|g_r|} g_r^{ij} \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^j} dx &= \int_B \sqrt{|g_r|} \left(\nabla \Phi_r \cdot \nabla \Phi - \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi_r) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle \right) dx + O(r^3) \\ &= - \int_B \sqrt{|g_r|} (\Delta \Phi) \Phi_r dx - \int_B \Phi_r \nabla \sqrt{|g_r|} \cdot \nabla \Phi dx - \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi_r) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle dx + O(r^3) \\ &= \mu_2(B) \int_B \Phi \Phi_r dv_{g_r} + \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \Phi_r Ric_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi) dx - \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi_r) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle dx + O(r^3). \end{aligned} \quad (27)$$

Therefore, since $\int_B \Phi \Phi_r dv_{g_r} \rightarrow 1$ and $\Phi_r \rightarrow \Phi$ in $H^1(B)$ as $r \rightarrow 0$, we obtain

$$\mu_2(B, g_r) = \mu_2(B) + \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \Phi Ric_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi) dx - \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle dx + o(r^2). \quad (28)$$

Noticing that

$$\tilde{\nabla} \Phi(x) = \frac{1}{|x|^2} \left(\varphi'(|x|) - \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|} \right) \langle A, X \rangle X + \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|} A \quad \text{with } A := a^i E_i \in T_{y_0} \mathcal{M}, \quad (29)$$

we find

$$\begin{aligned} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle dx &= \int_B \frac{\varphi^2(|x|)}{|x|^2} \langle R_{y_0}(X, A) X, A \rangle dx = \langle R_{y_0}(E_i, A) E_j, A \rangle \int_B \frac{\varphi^2(|x|)}{|x|^2} x^i x^j dx \\ &= \langle R_{y_0}(E_i, A) E_j, A \rangle \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N-1} dt \int_{\partial B} x^i x^j d\sigma = -Ric_{y_0}(A, A). \end{aligned} \quad (30)$$

Here we used the identity $\int_{\partial B} x^i x^j d\sigma = \delta^{ij} |B|$ and the normalization (2) in the last step. Moreover, we compute via integration by parts, using (23),

$$\begin{aligned} 2 \int_B \Phi Ric_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi) dx &= 2 R_{ij} \int_B x^i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^j} \Phi dx = R_{ii} \int_B x^i \frac{\partial \Phi^2}{\partial x^i} dx \\ &= - \left(\sum_{i=1}^N R_{ii} \right) \int_B \Phi^2 dx + R_{ii} \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 \Phi^2 d\sigma \\ &= -S(y_0) \int_B \frac{(a \cdot x)^2}{|x|^2} \varphi^2(|x|) dx + \varphi^2(1) R_{ii} \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 (a \cdot x)^2 d\sigma. \end{aligned}$$

Recalling (14) and using the identities

$$\int_{\partial B} [x^1]^4 d\sigma = 3 \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 [x^j]^2 d\sigma = \frac{3|B|}{N+2} \quad \text{and} \quad \int_{\partial B} x^i x^j [x^k]^2 d\sigma = 0 \quad \text{for } i, j, k = 1, \dots, N, i \neq j,$$

we find that

$$\begin{aligned} 2 \int_B \Phi Ric_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi) dx &= -S(y_0) + \varphi^2(1) R_{ii} a_k a_l \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 x^k x^l d\sigma \\ &= -S(y_0) + \varphi^2(1) R_{ii} [a_k]^2 \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 [x^k]^2 d\sigma = -S(y_0) + \frac{\varphi^2(1)|B|}{N+2} \left(S(y_0) + 2R_{kk} [a^k]^2 \right) \\ &= \left(\frac{\varphi^2(1)|B|}{N+2} - 1 \right) S(y_0) + 2 \frac{\varphi^2(1)|B|}{N+2} Ric_{y_0}(A, A). \end{aligned} \quad (31)$$

Combining (28), (29) and (30), we get

$$\mu_2(B, g_r) = \mu_2(B) + \frac{r^2}{6} \left(\frac{|B|\varphi^2(1)}{N+2} - 1 \right) S(y_0) + \frac{r^2}{3} \left(\frac{|B|\varphi^2(1)}{N+2} + 1 \right) Ric_{y_0}(A, A) + o(r^2)$$

and therefore

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) = \frac{\mu_2(B, g_r)}{r^2} = \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + \alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ Ric_{y_0}(A, A) + o(1). \quad (32)$$

We now need to recall that – more precisely – here we have passed to a sequence $r = r_k \rightarrow 0$. Nevertheless, the argument implies that

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) \geq \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + \alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ Ric_{y_0}(A, A) + o(1) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0. \quad (33)$$

Indeed, if – arguing by contradiction – there is a sequence $r_k \rightarrow 0$ such that

$$\limsup_{k \rightarrow \infty} \left[\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r_k), g) - \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r_k^2} \right] < \alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ Ric_{y_0}(A, A), \quad (34)$$

then by the above argument there exists a subsequence along which the expansion (32) holds with some $A \in T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}$ with $|A| = 1$, thus contradicting (34). By (33), the proof of Proposition 3.1 is finished once we have shown that

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) \leq \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + \alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ Ric_{y_0}(A, A) + o(1) \quad (35)$$

for all $A \in T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}$ with $|A| = 1$. So now consider $a = (a^1, \dots, a^N) \in \mathbb{R}^N$ arbitrary with $|a| = 1$, and let $A = a^i E_i \in T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}$. We define

$$\tilde{\Phi} : \overline{B} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \quad \tilde{\Phi}(x) = \varphi(|x|) \frac{a \cdot x}{|x|}$$

and

$$c_r := \frac{1}{|B|} \int_B \tilde{\Phi} dv_{g_r}.$$

Then, by Lemma 2.3,

$$c_r = \left(\frac{1}{|B|} + O(r^2) \right) \left(\int_B \tilde{\Phi}(x) [1 - \frac{1}{6} Ric_{y_0}(X, X)] dx + O(r^3) \right) = \left(\frac{1}{|B|} + O(r^2) \right) O(r^3) = O(r^3),$$

since the function $x \mapsto \tilde{\Phi}(x) [1 - \frac{1}{6} Ric_{y_0}(X, X)]$ is odd with respect to reflection at the origin. Hence, using the variational characterization of $\mu_2(B, g_r)$, we find that

$$\mu_2(B, g_r) \leq \frac{\int_B |\nabla(\tilde{\Phi} - c_r)|_{g_r}^2 dv_{g_r}}{\int_B (\tilde{\Phi} - c_r)^2 dv_{g_r}} = \frac{\int_B |\nabla \tilde{\Phi}|_{g_r}^2 dv_{g_r}}{\int_B \tilde{\Phi}^2 + O(r^3) dv_{g_r}} = \frac{\int_B |\nabla \tilde{\Phi}|_{g_r}^2 dv_{g_r} + O(r^3)}{\int_B \tilde{\Phi}^2 dv_{g_r}}$$

and therefore

$$\mu_2(B, g_r) \int_B \tilde{\Phi}^2 dv_{g_r} \leq \int_{B_g(y_0, r)} |\nabla \tilde{\Phi}|_{g_r}^2 dv_{g_r} + O(r^3) = \int_B \sqrt{|g_r|} g_r^{ij} \frac{\partial \tilde{\Phi}}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \tilde{\Phi}}{\partial x^j} dx + O(r^3).$$

It is by now straightforward that the same estimates as above – starting from (27) – hold with both Φ_r and Φ replaced by $\tilde{\Phi}$. We thus obtain (35), as required. ■

Corollary 3.2 *We have*

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) = \left(1 - \beta(y_0) \left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + o\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}}\right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v) \quad (36)$$

as $v = |B_g(y_0, r)|_g \rightarrow 0$ with

$$\beta(y_0) = \frac{\mu_2(B)S(y_0) - 3N(N+2)(\alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ R_{min}(y_0))}{3N(N+2)\mu_2(B)}.$$

PROOF. By the volume expansion (21) of geodesic balls we have

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\frac{v}{r^N|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} &= \left(\frac{|B_g(y_0, r)|_g}{r^N|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} = 1 - \frac{1}{3N(N+2)}S(y_0)r^2 + o(r^2) \\ &= 1 - \frac{1}{3N(N+2)}S(y_0)\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + o\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \end{aligned}$$

as $v = |B_g(y_0, r)|_g \rightarrow 0$. Together with Lemma 3.1 this yields

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) &= \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + \alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ R_{min}(y_0) + o(1) \\ &= \left(\left(\frac{v}{r^N|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + \frac{\alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ R_{min}(y_0)}{\mu_2(B)} \left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + o\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}}\right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v) \\ &= \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3N(N+2)}S(y_0) - \frac{\alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2\alpha_N^+ R_{min}(y_0)}{\mu_2(B)}\right) \left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + o\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}}\right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v) \\ &= \left(1 - \beta(y_0) \left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + o\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}}\right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v) \end{aligned}$$

as $v = |B_g(y_0, r)|_g \rightarrow 0$. ■

Remark 3.3 (i) Since

$$R_{min}(y_0) \leq \frac{S(y_0)}{N}, \quad (37)$$

and

$$\alpha_N^- + \frac{2\alpha_N^+}{N} = \frac{|B|\varphi^2(1) - (N-2)}{6N}, \quad (38)$$

Proposition 3.1 and Corollary 3.2 yield

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) &\leq \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + (\alpha_N^- + \frac{2\alpha_N^+}{N})S(y_0) + o(1) \\ &= \left(1 - \gamma_N \left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} S(y_0) + o\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}}\right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v) \end{aligned} \quad (39)$$

as $v = |B_g(y_0, r)|_g \rightarrow 0$ (and therefore $r \rightarrow 0$) with γ_N as in (3). Notice that when $N = 2$, equality holds in (37) and (39). Therefore the two-dimensional version of (36) is

$$\mu_2(B_g(y_0, r), g) = \left(1 - \gamma_2 \frac{v}{|B|} S(y_0) + o\left(\frac{v}{|B|}\right)\right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^2}(v).$$

(ii) Denote by (\mathbb{M}^N, g_k) a space of constant sectional curvature k . Then equality holds in (37) because $Ric = (N-1)k g_k$ on \mathbb{M}^N . In particular if E is a ball in (\mathbb{M}^N, g_k) with small volume, one has that

$$\mu_2(E, g_k) = \left(1 - \gamma_N \left(\frac{|E|_{g_k}}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}} N(N-1)k + o\left(\frac{|E|_{g_k}}{|B|}\right)^{\frac{2}{N}}\right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(|E|_{g_k}). \quad (40)$$

4 Expansion of μ_2 for small geodesic ellipsoids

As before we fix $y_0 \in \mathcal{M}$, and we continue to assume that the orthonormal basis E_1, \dots, E_N of $T_{y_0}\mathcal{M}$ is chosen such that (23) holds. In the following, we consider

$$\nu_N = \frac{2\mu_2(B) + N|B|\varphi^2(1)}{N+2} > 0,$$

and we let

$$b_i = b^i := \frac{\alpha_N^+}{\nu_N} (R_{ii} - \frac{S(y_0)}{N}) \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, N, \quad (41)$$

where α_N^+ is defined in Proposition 3.1. The reason for this choice will become clear later. We note that $\sum_{i=1}^N b_i = 0$ since $S(y_0) = \sum_{i=1}^N R_{ii}$. For $r > 0$, we now consider the geodesic ellipsoids $E(y_0, r) := F_r(B) \subset \mathcal{M}$, where

$$F_r : B \rightarrow \mathcal{M}, \quad F_r(x) = \text{Exp}_{y_0}(r(1 + r^2 b_i)x^i E_i).$$

The special choice of the values b_i gives rise to the following asymptotic expansion where the local geometry only enters via the scalar curvature at y_0 .

Proposition 4.1 *As $r \rightarrow 0$, we have*

$$\mu_2(E(y_0, r), g) = \frac{\mu_2(B)}{r^2} + (\alpha_N^- + \frac{2\alpha_N^+}{N})S(y_0) + o(1), \quad (42)$$

with α_N^\pm as in Proposition 3.1 and

$$|E(y_0, r)|_g = |B_g(y_0, r)|_g + O(r^{N+4}) = r^N |B| \left(1 - \frac{1}{6(N+2)} r^2 S(y_0) + O(r^4)\right). \quad (43)$$

PROOF. We consider the pull back metric h_r on B of g under the map F_r rescaled with the factor $\frac{1}{r^2}$. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} [h_r]_{i,j}(x) &= (1 + r^2 b_i)(1 + r^2 b_j)[g_r]_{ij}((1 + r^2 b_k)x^k e_k) = [g_r]_{ij}(x) + r^2(b_i + b_j)\delta_{ij} + O(r^4) \\ &= \delta_{ij} + r^2 \left(\frac{1}{3} \langle R_{y_0}(X, E_i)X, E_j \rangle + (b_i + b_j)\delta_{ij} \right) + O(r^3) \end{aligned} \quad (44)$$

uniformly in $x \in B$. Setting $|h_r| = \det([h_r]_{ij})_{ij}$, we deduce the expansion

$$|h_r|(x) = |g_r|(x) + 2r^2 \sum_{i=1}^N b_i + O(r^4) = |g_r|(x) + O(r^4) \quad \text{for } x \in B.$$

This implies that

$$|E(y_0, r)|_g = r^N |B|_{h_r} = r^N \left(|B|_{g_r} + O(r^4) \right) = |B_g(y_0, r)|_g + O(r^{N+4}),$$

as claimed in (43).

We now turn to (42). We first note that $\mu_2(B, h_r) = r^2 \mu_2(E(y_0, r), g)$; therefore (42) is equivalent to

$$\mu_2(B, h_r) = \mu_2(B) + r^2 (\alpha_N^- + \frac{2\alpha_N^+}{N})S(y_0) + o(r^2). \quad (45)$$

Let Φ_r be an eigenfunction for $\mu_2(B, h_r)$, normalized such that $\int_B \Phi_r^2 dv_{h_r} = 1$ with $dv_{h_r} = \sqrt{|h_r|} dx$. Then we have

$$\Delta_{h_r} \Phi_r + \mu_2(B, h_r) \Phi_r = 0 \quad \text{in } B, \quad \langle \nabla \Phi_r, \eta \rangle_{h_r} = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial B,$$

where

$$\Delta_{h_r} \Phi_r = \frac{1}{\sqrt{|h_r|}} \frac{\partial}{\partial x^i} \left(\sqrt{|h_r|} h_r^{ij} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^j} \right).$$

Since h_r converges to the Euclidean metric in B , the variational characterization of μ_2 implies that $\mu_2(B, h_r) \rightarrow \mu_2(B)$. Moreover, as in the proof of Proposition 3.1 we have $\Phi_{r_k} \rightarrow \Phi$ in $H^1(B)$ along a sequence $r_k \rightarrow 0$ with some function $\Phi \in C_{loc}^2(B) \cap C^1(\overline{B})$ satisfying

$$\Delta \Phi + \mu_2(B) \Phi = 0 \quad \text{in } B, \quad \langle \nabla \Phi, \eta \rangle = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial B, \quad \int_B \Phi^2 dx = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad \int_B \Phi dx = 0.$$

Hence there exists a vector $a = (a_1, \dots, a_N) = (a^1, \dots, a^N) \in \mathbb{R}^N$ with $|a| = 1$ and such that

$$\Phi(x) = \varphi(|x|) \frac{a \cdot x}{|x|} \quad \text{for } x \in \overline{B}.$$

For matters of convenience, we will continue to write r instead of r_k in the following. By multiple integration by parts, using (44) and (26), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(B, h_r) \int_B \Phi \Phi_r dv_{h_r} &= - \int_B \Phi \Delta_{h_r} \Phi_r dv_{h_r} = \int_B \sqrt{|h_r|} h_r^{ij} \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^j} dx \\ &= \int_B \sqrt{|h_r|} \left[\nabla \Phi_r \cdot \nabla \Phi - r^2 \left(\frac{1}{3} \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi_r) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle + 2b^i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^i} \right) \right] dx + O(r^3) \\ &= - \int_B \sqrt{|h_r|} (\Delta \Phi) \Phi_r dx - \int_B \Phi_r \nabla \sqrt{|h_r|} \cdot \nabla \Phi dx - \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi_r) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle dx \\ &\quad - 2r^2 \int_B b^i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^i} dx + O(r^3) \\ &= \mu_2(B) \int_B \Phi \Phi_r dv_{h_r} + \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B Ric_{y_0}(\tilde{\nabla} \Phi, X) \Phi_r dx - \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi_r) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle dx \\ &\quad - 2r^2 \int_B b^i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^i} dx + O(r^3). \end{aligned}$$

Since $\int_B \Phi \Phi_r dv_{h_r} \rightarrow 1$ and $\Phi_r \rightarrow \Phi$ in $H^1(B)$ as $r \rightarrow 0$, we may use the calculations in the proof of Proposition 3.1 starting from (28) to obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(B, h_r) &= \mu_2(B) + \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B Ric_{y_0}(\tilde{\nabla} \Phi, X) \Phi_r dx - \frac{r^2}{3} \int_B \langle R_{y_0}(X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi_r) X, \tilde{\nabla} \Phi \rangle dx \\ &\quad - 2r^2 \int_B b^i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \frac{\partial \Phi_r}{\partial x^i} dx + o(r^2) \\ &= \mu_2(B) + r^2 \left(\alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2r^2 \alpha_N^+ Ric_{y_0}(A, A) - 2 \int_B b^i \left(\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \right)^2 dx \right) + o(r^2) \end{aligned} \quad (46)$$

with $A := a^i E_i \in T_{y_0} \mathcal{M}$. It remains to compute $\int_B b^i \left(\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \right)^2 dx$.

We have $\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} = \left(\varphi'(|x|) - \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|} \right) \frac{x^i}{|x|^2} a_j x^j + a_i \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|}$ and thus

$$\left(\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \right)^2 = \frac{1}{|x|^4} \left(\varphi'(|x|) - \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|} \right)^2 a_j a_k [x^i]^2 x^j x^k + a_i^2 \frac{\varphi^2(|x|)}{|x|^2} + 2 \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|^3} \left(\varphi'(|x|) - \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|} \right) a_i a_j x^i x^j$$

for $x \in B$ and $i = 1, \dots, N$. Noting the oddness of some of the integrands and passing to polar coordinates, we therefore obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_B b^i \left(\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \right)^2 dx &= b_i a_j^2 \int_B \frac{1}{|x|^4} \left(\varphi'(|x|) - \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|} \right)^2 [x^i]^2 [x^j]^2 dx + b^i a_i^2 \int_B \frac{\varphi^2(|x|)}{|x|^2} dx \\
&\quad + 2b^i a_i^2 \int_B \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|^3} \left(\varphi'(|x|) - \frac{\varphi(|x|)}{|x|} \right) [x^i]^2 \\
&= b_i a_j^2 \int_0^1 t^{N-1} \left(\varphi'(t) - \frac{\varphi(t)}{t} \right)^2 dt \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 [x^j]^2 d\sigma + b^i a_i^2 |\partial B| \int_0^1 t^{N-3} \varphi^2 dt \\
&\quad + 2b^i a_i^2 \int_0^1 t^{N-2} \varphi(t) \left(\varphi'(t) - \frac{\varphi(t)}{t} \right) dt \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 d\sigma. \tag{47}
\end{aligned}$$

Put $d_N := \int_0^1 t^{N-3} \varphi^2 dt$. By (13), we have

$$\int_0^1 t^{N-1} (\varphi')^2(t) dt = \frac{\mu_2(B)}{|B|} - (N-1)d_N \quad \text{and} \quad \int_0^1 t^{N-2} \varphi'(t) \varphi(t) dt = \frac{\varphi^2(1)}{2} - \frac{N-2}{2} d_N$$

hence

$$\int_0^1 t^{N-1} \left(\varphi'(t) - \frac{\varphi(t)}{t} \right)^2 dt = \frac{\mu_2(B)}{|B|} - \varphi^2(1) \quad \text{and} \quad \int_0^1 t^{N-2} \varphi(t) \left(\varphi'(t) - \frac{\varphi(t)}{t} \right) dt = \frac{1}{2} (\varphi^2(1) - N d_N).$$

Inserting this in (47), we get

$$\int_B b^i \left(\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \right)^2 dx = b_i a_j^2 \left(\frac{\mu_2(B)}{|B|} - \varphi^2(1) \right) \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 [x^j]^2 d\sigma + b^i a_i^2 |\partial B| d_N + b^i a_i^2 (\varphi^2(1) - N d_N) \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 d\sigma.$$

Recalling furthermore the identities

$$\int_{\partial B} [x^i]^4 d\sigma = 3 \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 [x^j]^2 d\sigma = \frac{3}{N+2} |B|, \quad \int_{\partial B} (x^i)^2 d\sigma = \frac{|\partial B|}{N} = |B|$$

for $i, j = 1, \dots, N$, $i \neq j$ and also that $\sum_{i=1}^N b_i = 0$, we obtain

$$b_i \int_{\partial B} [x^i]^2 [x^j]^2 d\sigma = \frac{2|B|}{N+2} b^j \quad \text{for } j = 1, \dots, N$$

and thus

$$\begin{aligned}
\int_B b^i \left(\frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial x^i} \right)^2 dx &= b^j a_j^2 \left(\frac{\mu_2(B)}{|B|} - \varphi^2(1) \right) \frac{2|B|}{N+2} + b^i a_i^2 N |B| d_N + b^i a_i^2 (\varphi^2(1) - N d_N) |B| \\
&= b^i a_i^2 \frac{2\mu_2(B) + N|B|\varphi^2(1)}{N+2} = \nu_N b^i a_i^2.
\end{aligned}$$

Inserting this in (46), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
\mu_2(B, h_r) &= \mu_2(B) + r^2 \left[\alpha_N^- S(y_0) + 2(\alpha_N^+ Ric_{y_0}(A, A) - \nu_N b^i a_i^2) \right] + o(r^2) \\
&= \mu_2(B) + r^2 \left[\left(\alpha_N^- + \frac{2a_N^+}{N} \right) S(y_0) + 2(\alpha_N^+ (Ric_{y_0}(A, A) - \frac{S(y_0)}{N}) - \nu_N b^i a_i^2) \right] + o(r^2),
\end{aligned}$$

where

$$\alpha_N^+ (Ric_{y_0}(A, A) - \frac{S(y_0)}{N}) - \nu_N b^i a_i^2 = [a^i]^2 \left(\alpha_N^+ (R_{ii} - \frac{S(y_0)}{N}) - \nu_N b_i \right) = 0$$

by our choice of the $b_i = b^i$ in (41). This shows (45), as required. ■

Corollary 4.2 *We have*

$$\mu_2(E(y_0, r), g) = \left(1 - \gamma_N \left(\frac{v}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} + o \left(\frac{v}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v), \tag{48}$$

as $v = |E(y_0, r)|_g \rightarrow 0$ with γ_N as in (3).

PROOF. This follows readily by combining (38), (42) and (43). ■

5 A local upper bound for μ_2

We fix $r_0 > 0$ less than the convexity radius of \mathcal{M} at y_0 , so that r_0 is also less than the injectivity radius of \mathcal{M} at y_0 . As in [14], we consider the function

$$G : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \quad G(t) = \begin{cases} \varphi(t) & \text{if } t \leq 1, \\ \varphi(1) & \text{if } t > 1, \end{cases}$$

where φ is the function defined in Section 2. Throughout this section, we consider a sequence of numbers $r_k \in (0, \frac{r_0}{3})$ such that $r_k \rightarrow 0$ as $k \rightarrow \infty$, and we suppose that we are given regular domains $\Omega_{r_k} \subset B_g(y_0, r_k)$, $k \in \mathbb{N}$. In order to keep the notation as simple as possible, we will write r instead of r_k in the following. By [1, Theorem 3], there exists a point $p_r \in B_g(y_0, r)$ such that

$$\int_{\Omega_r} \frac{G(|\text{Exp}_{p_r}^{-1}(q)|_g)}{|\text{Exp}_{p_r}^{-1}(q)|_g} \text{Exp}_{p_r}^{-1}(q) dv_g = 0. \quad (49)$$

Moreover, there exists a unique $\rho_r \in (0, r)$ such that $|\Omega_r|_g = |B_g(p_r, \rho_r)|_g$. We have that, for every $r > 0$ small, $B_g(p_r, \rho_r) \subset B_g(y_0, 2r)$ and also $\Omega_r \subset B_g(p_r, 2r)$. Now we need to extend some of the notations introduced in Section 2. For this we let

$$y \mapsto E_i^y \in T_y \mathcal{M}, \quad i = 1, \dots, N$$

denote a smooth orthonormal frame on $B_g(y_0, r_0)$, and we define

$$\Psi_r : \mathbb{R}^N \rightarrow \mathcal{M}, \quad \Psi_r(x) = \text{Exp}_{p_r}(x^i E_i^y).$$

We also define

$$B^r := \frac{2r}{\rho_r} B \quad \text{and} \quad U_r := \frac{1}{\rho_r} \Psi_r^{-1}(\Omega_r) \subset B^r, \quad (50)$$

and we consider the pull back metric of g under the map $B^r \rightarrow \mathcal{M}$, $x \mapsto \Psi_r(\rho_r x)$, rescaled with the factor $\frac{1}{\rho_r^2}$. We denote this metric on B^r by g_r , and we point out that this definition differs from the notation used in the proof of Proposition 3.1. By (49), it is plain that

$$\int_{U_r} \frac{G(|x|)}{|x|} x^i dv_{g_r} = 0 \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, N. \quad (51)$$

We also write

$$R_{ijkl}^r := \langle R_y(E_i^{p_r}, E_j^{p_r}) E_k^{p_r}, E_l^{p_r} \rangle \quad \text{and} \quad R_{ij}^r := \text{Ric}_{p_r}(E_i^{p_r}, E_j^{p_r})$$

for $i, j, k, l = 1, \dots, N$. To be consistent with the notation introduced in the end of Section 2, we also write

$$R_{ijkl} := \langle R_{y_0}(E_i^{y_0}, E_j^{y_0}) E_k^{y_0}, E_l^{y_0} \rangle \quad \text{and} \quad R_{ij} := \text{Ric}_{y_0}(E_i^{y_0}, E_j^{y_0}).$$

Since $\text{dist}(p_r, y_0) = O(r)$, we then have

$$R_{ijkl}^r = R_{ijkl} + O(r) \quad \text{and} \quad R_{ij}^r = R_{ij} + O(r) \quad \text{for } i, j, k, l = 1, \dots, N. \quad (52)$$

By Lemma 2.3 we also have

$$\begin{aligned} (g_r)_{ij}(x) &= \delta_{ij} + \frac{\rho_r^2}{3} R_{kilj}^r x^k x^l + |x|^3 O(\rho_r^3); \\ dv_{g_r}(x) &= \sqrt{|g_r(x)|} dx = \left(1 - \frac{\rho_r^2}{6} R_{lk}^r x^l x^k + |x|^3 O(\rho_r^3)\right) dx, \end{aligned} \quad (53)$$

uniformly on B^r , where $|g_r|$ is the determinant of g_r , so in particular

$$(g_r)_{ij}(x) = \delta_{ij} + O(r^2) \quad \text{and} \quad dv_{g_r}(x) = (1 + O(r^2)) dx \quad \text{uniformly on } B^r. \quad (54)$$

Observe that

$$|U_r|_{g_r} = \rho_r^{-N} |\Omega_r|_g = \rho_r^{-N} |B_g(p_r, \rho_r)|_g = |B|_{g_r} \quad \text{and} \quad \mu_2(U_r, g_r) = \frac{\mu_2(\Omega_r, g)}{\rho_r^2}. \quad (55)$$

Moreover, since $U_r \subset B^r$ and $B \subset B^r$, we infer from (54) that

$$|U_r| = (1 + O(r^2)) |U_r|_{g_r} = (1 + O(r^2)) |B|_{g_r} = (1 + O(r^2)) |B|. \quad (56)$$

Setting

$$f_i : \mathbb{R}^N \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \quad f_i(x) = \frac{G(|x|)}{|x|} x^i,$$

we find that $\int_{U_r} f_i dv_{g_r} = 0$ for $i = 1, \dots, N$ by (51), and hence the variational characterization of μ_2 yields

$$\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N \int_{U_r} |\nabla f_i|_{g_r}^2 dv_{g_r}}{\sum_{i=1}^N \int_{U_r} f_i^2 dv_{g_r}}. \quad (57)$$

We also note that

$$\frac{\partial f_i}{\partial x^k} = \frac{G'}{|x|^2} x^i x^k + \frac{G}{|x|} [\delta_{ik} - \frac{x^i x^k}{|x|^2}] \quad \text{for every } i, k = 1, \dots, N \quad (58)$$

and, by direct calculation as in [14],

$$\sum_{i=1}^N f_i^2 = G^2, \quad \sum_{i=1}^N |\nabla f_i|^2 = (G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2}. \quad (59)$$

Here and in the following, we simply write G instead of $G(|\cdot|)$ or $G(|x|)$ and G' instead of $G'(|\cdot|)$ or $G'(|x|)$ if the meaning is clear from the context. In particular, using (59), (14) and recalling that φ and G coincide in $[0, 1]$, we observe that

$$\begin{aligned} \int_B \left((G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) dx &= \sum_{i=1}^N \int_B |\nabla f_i|^2 dx = \mu_2(B) \sum_{i=1}^N \int_B |f_i|^2 dx \\ &= \mu_2(B) \int_B \varphi^2(|x|) dx = N \mu_2(B). \end{aligned} \quad (60)$$

Lemma 5.1 *In the above setting, we have*

$$\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq \frac{\int_{U_r} \left((G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) dv_{g_r} + \frac{\rho_r^2}{3} \int_{U_r} \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} R_{lk}^r x^l x^k dv_{g_r}}{\int_{U_r} G^2 dv_{g_r}} + O(r \rho_r^2). \quad (61)$$

as $r \rightarrow 0$. Moreover,

$$(1 + O(r^2)) \mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq \mu_2(U_r) \quad (62)$$

and

$$\int_{U_r} G^2 dv_{g_r} \geq N - \frac{|B| \rho_r^2}{6} S(y_0) \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N+1} dt + O(r \rho_r^2). \quad (63)$$

PROOF. We start by proving (63). Clearly

$$\int_{U_r} G^2 dv_{g_r} = \int_B G^2 dv_{g_r} + \int_{U_r \setminus (U_r \cap B)} G^2 dv_{g_r} - \int_{B \setminus (U_r \cap B)} G^2 dv_{g_r}.$$

Using (55), the fact that G is non-decreasing and that $G = \varphi(1)$ on $U_r \setminus (U_r \cap B)$ we get

$$\int_{U_r} G^2 dv_{g_r} \geq \int_B G^2 dv_{g_r} + \varphi(1)^2 (|U_r \setminus (U_r \cap B)|_{g_r} - |B \setminus (U_r \cap B)|_{g_r}) = \int_B G^2 dv_{g_r}.$$

Now by (53) and (14) we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_B G^2 dv_{g_r} &= \int_B \varphi^2(|x|) dx - \frac{\rho_r^2}{6} \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N+1} dt \int_{\partial B} R_{lk}^r x^l x^k d\sigma + O(\rho_r^3) \\ &= N - \frac{|B|\rho_r^2}{6} S(y_0) \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N+1} dt + O(r\rho_r^2). \end{aligned}$$

From this we conclude

$$\int_{U_r} G^2 dv_{g_r} \geq N - \frac{|B|\rho_r^2}{6} S(y_0) \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N+1} dt + O(r\rho_r^2),$$

so that (63) holds. Moreover, by (53) we have

$$|\nabla f_i|_{g_r}^2 = |\nabla f_i|^2 - \frac{\rho_r^2}{3} R_{jklm}^r x^j \frac{\partial f_i}{\partial x^k} x^l \frac{\partial f_i}{\partial x^m} + O(\rho_r^3 |x|^3 |\nabla f_i|^2),$$

in B^r . Using furthermore that, by general properties of the Riemannian curvature tensor, $R_{jklm}^r x^j x^k = 0$ for every l, m and $R_{jklm}^r x^l x^m = 0$ for every j, k , we obtain

$$R_{jklm}^r x^j \frac{\partial f_i}{\partial x^k} x^l \frac{\partial f_i}{\partial x^m} = \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} R_{jili}^r x^j x^l$$

by (58). Therefore, summing over i and using (59), we find that

$$\sum_{i=1}^N |\nabla f_i|_{g_r}^2 = (G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} + \frac{\rho_r^2 G^2}{3|x|^2} R_{jl}^r x^j x^l + O\left(\rho_r^3 |x|^3 \left((G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2}\right)\right). \quad (64)$$

To estimate the last term in (64), we first note that, since $G' \equiv 0$ in $U_r \setminus (U_r \cap B) \subset B^r$,

$$\begin{aligned} \rho_r^3 \int_{U_r \setminus (U_r \cap B)} |x|^3 \left((G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2}\right) dv_{g_r} &= \rho_r^3 G(1)^2 \int_{U_r \setminus (U_r \cap B)} \frac{|x|^3}{|x|^2} dv_{g_r} \\ &\leq r \rho_r^2 G(1)^2 |U|_{g_r} = O(r\rho_r^2). \end{aligned}$$

Moreover, since $|x| \leq 1$ in B we have

$$\rho_r^3 \int_B |x|^3 \left((G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2}\right) dv_{g_r} = O(\rho_r^3) = O(r\rho_r^2).$$

Hence we deduce that

$$\int_{U_r} O\left(\rho_r^3 |x|^3 \left((G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2}\right)\right) dv_{g_r} = O(r\rho_r^2). \quad (65)$$

Now (61) follows immediately from (57), (59), (63), (64) and (65). Combining (61) and (63), we also deduce that

$$\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq C + O(r^2) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0 \text{ with a constant } C > 0. \quad (66)$$

Now to prove (62), we consider a normalized eigenfunction h_r corresponding to $\mu_2(U_r)$, i.e. $h_r \in H^1(U_r)$ satisfies

$$\int_{U_r} h_r^2 dx = 1, \quad \int_{U_r} h_r dx = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \int_{U_r} |\nabla h_r|^2 dx = \mu_2(U_r).$$

By (54) and (56) we then have

$$\left| \frac{1}{|U_r|_{g_r}} \int_{U_r} h_r dv_{g_r} \right| = O(r^2) \frac{1}{|U_r|_{g_r}} \int_{U_r} |h_r| dx \leq O(r^2) \frac{\sqrt{|U_r|}}{|U_r|_{g_r}} = O(r^2),$$

With $c_r = \frac{1}{|U_r|_{g_r}} \int_{U_r} h_r dv_{g_r}$ we therefore deduce

$$\int_{U_r} (h_r - c_r)^2 dv_{g_r} = \int_{U_r} (h_r + O(r^2))^2 (1 + O(r^2)) dx = 1 + O(r^2).$$

Therefore the variational characterization of $\mu_2(U_r, g_r)$ yields

$$\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq \frac{1}{1 + O(r^2)} \int_{U_r} |\nabla h_r|_{g_r}^2 dv_{g_r} = (1 + O(r^2)) \int_{U_r} |\nabla h_r|^2 (1 + O(r^2)) dx = (1 + O(r^2)) \mu_2(U_r),$$

and (62) follows. ■

The following lemma controls the symmetric distance between B and U_r with the help of a recent stability estimate of Brasco and Pratelli [3] for μ_2 in the euclidean setting.

Lemma 5.2 *Assume that $\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \geq \mu_2(B)(1 + o(1))$ as $r \rightarrow 0$ for the family of domains U_r defined in (50), and let $U_r \triangle B = (U_r \cup B) \setminus (U_r \cap B)$. Then*

$$|U_r \triangle B| \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0. \quad (67)$$

PROOF. We consider the rescaled set $U'_r = (1 + \delta(r))U_r$, where $\delta(r)$ is chosen such that $|U'_r| = |B|$. Then $\delta(r) = O(r^2)$ by (56). By (62) and by assumption, we see that

$$\mu_2(U'_r) = (1 + \delta(r))^{-2} \mu_2(U_r) \geq (1 + O(r^2)) \mu_2(U_r, g_r) \geq \mu_2(B)(1 + o(1)) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0,$$

whereas $\mu_2(U'_r) \leq \mu(B)$ by Weinberger's result [14]. By [3, Theorem 4.1], there exist points $x_r \in \mathbb{R}^N$ such that

$$|U'_r \triangle B(x_r)|^2 \leq C(\mu_2(B) - \mu_2(U'_r)) \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0 \quad (68)$$

with some constant $C > 0$, where $B(x_r)$ stands for the ball in \mathbb{R}^N centered at x_r with radius 1. Since $\delta(r) = O(r^2)$, it is easy to see that

$$\lim_{r \rightarrow 0} |U_r \triangle B(x_r)| = \lim_{r \rightarrow 0} |U'_r \triangle B(x_r)| = 0. \quad (69)$$

Consequently, (67) follows once we have shown that $x_r \rightarrow 0$ as $r \rightarrow 0$. So we suppose by contradiction that, after passing to a subsequence, $\inf_r |x_r| > 0$ and $\frac{x_r}{|x_r|} \rightarrow x_0$ as $r \rightarrow 0$ for some $x_0 \in \mathbb{R}^N$ with $|x_0| = 1$. From (51), (54) and (69), we then infer that

$$\int_B G(|x + x_r|) \frac{x + x_r}{|x + x_r|} \cdot x_0 dx = \int_{B(x_r)} G(|x|) \frac{x}{|x|} \cdot x_0 dx = \int_{U_r} G(|x|) \frac{x}{|x|} \cdot x_0 dx + o(1) \rightarrow 0$$

as $r \rightarrow 0$. If $|x_r| \rightarrow \infty$ for a subsequence, it would follow by the definition of G that

$$\int_B \frac{x + x_r}{|x + x_r|} \cdot x_0 dx \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0,$$

whereas, on the other hand, $\frac{x + x_r}{|x + x_r|} \rightarrow x_0$ uniformly on B . This is impossible, so we conclude that the sequence x_r is bounded and therefore, along a subsequence, $x_r \rightarrow \tilde{x} \neq 0$ as $r \rightarrow 0$ for some $\tilde{x} \in \mathbb{R}^N \setminus \{0\}$. Using (51), (54) and (69) similarly as before, we now infer that

$$\int_B G(|x + \tilde{x}|) \frac{x + \tilde{x}}{|x + \tilde{x}|} \cdot \tilde{x} dx = 0 \quad (70)$$

Let $D := \{x \in B : x \cdot \tilde{x} > 0\}$, and let $\sigma : B \rightarrow B$ denote the reflection at the hyperplane $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^N : x \cdot \tilde{x} = 0\}$ given by $\sigma(x) = x - 2x \cdot \frac{\tilde{x}}{|\tilde{x}|^2} \tilde{x}$. Elementary geometric considerations show that

$$|x + \tilde{x}| > |\sigma(x) + \tilde{x}| \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{x + \tilde{x}}{|x + \tilde{x}|} \cdot \tilde{x} > \left| \frac{\sigma(x) + \tilde{x}}{|\sigma(x) + \tilde{x}|} \cdot \tilde{x} \right| \quad \text{for } x \in D \setminus \mathbb{R}\tilde{x}.$$

Since $G(|x|)$ is nondecreasing in $|x|$ and positive for $x \neq 0$, we conclude by a change of variable that

$$\int_B G(|x + \tilde{x}|) \frac{x + \tilde{x}}{|x + \tilde{x}|} \cdot \tilde{x} dx = \int_D \left[G(|x + \tilde{x}|) \frac{x + \tilde{x}}{|x + \tilde{x}|} \cdot \tilde{x} + G(|\sigma(x) + \tilde{x}|) \frac{\sigma(x) + \tilde{x}}{|\sigma(x) + \tilde{x}|} \cdot \tilde{x} \right] dx > 0,$$

contradicting (70). The contradiction shows that $x_r \rightarrow 0$ as $r \rightarrow 0$, which, as remarked before, yields the claim. ■

Lemma 5.3 *Assume that*

$$|U_r \triangle B| \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0 \quad (71)$$

for the family of domains U_r defined in (50). Then

$$\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq \left(1 - \frac{N-2-|B|\varphi(1)^2}{6N\mu_2(B)} \rho_r^2 S(y_0) + o(\rho_r^2) \right) \mu_2(B) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0. \quad (72)$$

PROOF. We shall estimate the terms in (61) to reach the upper bound (72). First note that, by (71), (52) and (14),

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{U_r} \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} R_{lk}^r x^l x^k dv_{g_r} &= \int_B \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} R_{lk}^r x^l x^k dv_{g_r} + o(1) = R_{kk} \int_B \varphi^2(|x|) \frac{[x^k]^2}{|x|^2} dx + o(1) \\ &= S(y_0) + o(1). \end{aligned} \quad (73)$$

Since, as noted in [14, p. 636], the mapping $|x| \mapsto (G')^2(|x|) + (N-1)\frac{G(|x|)^2}{|x|^2}$ is non-increasing, we have by (55)

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{U_r} \left((G')^2 + (N-1)\frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) dv_{g_r} &= \int_B \dots dv_{g_r} + \int_{U_r \setminus (U_r \cap B)} \dots dv_{g_r} - \int_{B \setminus (U_r \cap B)} \dots dv_{g_r} \\ &\leq \int_B \left((G')^2 + (N-1)\frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) dv_{g_r}. \end{aligned} \quad (74)$$

Moreover, using (53) and (60), we compute

$$\begin{aligned} \int_B \left((G')^2 + (N-1)\frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) dv_{g_r} &= \int_B \left((G')^2 + (N-1)\frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) \left(1 - \frac{\rho_r^2}{6} R_{lk}^r x^l x^k + |x|^3 O(\rho_r^3) \right) dx \\ &= \int_B \left((G')^2 + (N-1)\frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) dx - \frac{\rho_r^2}{6} \int_{\partial B} R_{lk}^r x^l x^k d\sigma \int_0^1 \left((\varphi')^2 + (N-1)\frac{\varphi^2}{t^2} \right) t^{N+1} dt + O(\rho_r^3) \\ &= N\mu_2(B) - \frac{|B|\rho_r^2}{6} S(y_0) \int_0^1 \left((\varphi')^2 + (N-1)\frac{\varphi^2}{t^2} \right) t^{N+1} dt + o(\rho_r^2). \end{aligned}$$

Notice that, by (13),

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^1 \left((\varphi')^2 + (N-1)\frac{\varphi^2}{t^2} \right) t^{N+1} dt &= \frac{1}{|B|} \int_B \varphi^2(|x|) dx - \varphi(1)^2 + \mu_2(B) \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N+1} dt \\ &= \frac{N}{|B|} - \varphi(1)^2 + \mu_2(B) \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N+1} dt \end{aligned}$$

The two equalities above and (74) yield

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{U_r} \left((G')^2 + (N-1) \frac{G^2}{|x|^2} \right) dv_{g_r} &\leq N\mu_2(B) - \frac{\rho_r^2 N}{6} S(y_0) + \frac{|B|\varphi(1)^2}{6} \rho_r^2 S(y_0) \\ &\quad - \frac{|B|\rho_r^2}{6} \mu_2(B) S(y_0) \int_0^1 \varphi^2 t^{N+1} dt + o(\rho_r^2). \end{aligned}$$

Combining this with (63) and (73), we obtain

$$\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq \mu_2(B) - \frac{N-2-|B|\varphi(1)^2}{6N} \rho_r^2 S(y_0) + o(\rho_r^2)$$

and the proof is complete. ■

6 Proof of the main result

In this section we complete the proof of Theorem 1.1. Part (i) follows immediately from Corollary 4.2, and the lower bound in Part (ii) is a direct consequence of Part (i). Hence it remains to prove the upper bound in Part (ii). For this we assume by contradiction that there exists $\varepsilon_0 > 0$ and sequences of numbers $r_k > 0$ and $v_{r_k} \in (0, |B_g(y_0, r_k)|_g)$ such that $r_k \rightarrow 0$ as $k \rightarrow \infty$ and

$$SW_{B_g(y_0, r_k)}(v_{r_k}) > \left(1 - (\gamma_N S(y_0) - \varepsilon_0) \left(\frac{v_{r_k}}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v_{r_k}).$$

Then there exist regular domains $\Omega_{r_k} \subset B_g(y_0, r_k)$ with $|\Omega_{r_k}|_g = v_{r_k}$ and such that

$$\mu_2(\Omega_{r_k}, g) > \left(1 - (\gamma_N S(y_0) - \varepsilon_0) \left(\frac{v_{r_k}}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \right) SW_{\mathbb{R}^N}(v_{r_k}). \quad (75)$$

As in Section 5, we write r instead of r_k in the following. We obtain $p_r \in B_g(y_0, r)$ such that (49) holds and we define ρ_r , g_r and U_r accordingly as above. It is easy to see from (75) and the scale invariance of $\Omega \mapsto |\Omega|_g^{\frac{2}{N}} \mu_2(\Omega, g)$ that

$$|U_r|_{g_r}^{\frac{2}{N}} \mu_2(U_r, g_r) > \left(1 - (\gamma_N S(y_0) - \varepsilon_0) \left(\frac{|B_g(p_r, \rho_r)|_g}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} \right) |B|^{\frac{2}{N}} \mu_2(B). \quad (76)$$

By (21) and (55), we also find

$$\left(\frac{|B|}{|U_r|_{g_r}} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} = \left(\frac{\rho_r^N |B|}{|B_g(p_r, \rho_r)|_g} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} = 1 + \frac{1}{3N(N+2)} S(y_0) \rho_r^2 + o(\rho_r^2)$$

and

$$\left(\frac{|B_g(p_r, \rho_r)|_g}{|B|} \right)^{\frac{2}{N}} = \rho_r^2 + o(\rho_r^2).$$

Combining this with (76), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(U_r, g_r) &> \left(1 + \left(\left[\frac{1}{3N(N+2)} - \gamma_N \right] S(y_0) + \varepsilon_0 \right) \rho_r^2 + o(\rho_r^2) \right) \mu_2(B) \\ &= \left(1 - \left(\frac{N-2-|B|\varphi(1)^2}{6N\mu_2(B)} S(y_0) - \varepsilon_0 \right) \rho_r^2 + o(\rho_r^2) \right) \mu_2(B) \end{aligned} \quad (77)$$

and in particular $\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \geq \mu_2(B)(1 + o(1))$ as $r \rightarrow 0$. From this, we can apply Lemma 5.2 to get that

$$|U_r \triangle B| \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0.$$

Therefore by Lemma 5.3 we get

$$\mu_2(U_r, g_r) \leq \left(1 - \frac{N-2-|B|\varphi(1)^2}{6N\mu_2(B)} S(y_0) \rho_r^2 + o(\rho_r^2) \right) \mu_2(B) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0,$$

and this contradicts (77). Hence Theorem 1.1 is proved.

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